

Seattle City Council

**Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting**

2 p.m. Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jourdan Keith**

Today's poet is **Felicia Gonzalez**

**Felicia Gonzalez** was born in Cuba. She believes that language and the act of speaking are not only physical, but have geographic presence. An alumna of the Hedgebrook Writers Retreat and the Jack Straw Writers Program, Felicia is a recipient of a 2007 Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship. Currently, Felicia is working on a collection of interrelated short stories, *Swimming in Mercury*, which received support from 4Culture and The Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs in Seattle.

**Palo Blanco**

by Felicia Gonzalez

“There is a reality, that is beyond the imagination. It seems magical, but it is there, just in front of you.” from *Wolfgang Laib: A Journey*

Under this same humid sky,  
time steps forward and back, dancing  
regardless of partner

The connection to land—  
resistant and rebellious

“I am in the trees above you, vigilant of your sleep”

Memory does not play with us  
memory extracts,  
exacts a toll,  
heavy and wet,  
rends each artery

Where is the exact location  
where geography and memory meet?

The absolute and fluid nature  
of what we know,  
what we fear,  
what we love is  
both constantly  
close and far,  
both the “home country” and the distant place  
to where we journey

We rush to feel the hard pelting  
of rain released from clouds,  
smell the dust that rises into our nostrils  
the fast sting of water as we duck under a tree,  
a ghost tree after the burning season

We want the storm and  
we want to be sheltered  
from the storm

*--End--*